

What About Water?

Did you know that water is the nutrient your body needs the most? Here are some of the functions of water in the body. Water...

- ...transports nutrients and medicines.
- ...protects against heat exhaustion.
- ...helps prevent constipation.
- ...keeps the body and skin hydrated.
- ...keeps eyes, mouth, and nose moist.
- ...carries away wastes.
- ...controls body temperature: cools the body in the summer and warms it in the winter.

How can you get enough water each day?? Here are a few tips...

- Drink water with your meals
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables...they are high in water content.
- Keep water in a pitcher in the refrigerator as a reminder.
- Keep a water bottle by your chair.
- Many people like hot water with lemon juice.
- Water is the best choice, but any non-alcoholic, decaffeinated beverage will count.
- Some foods contain more fluid, such as jello or soup.
- Try a variety of beverages such as milk, juices, lemonade, cider, or flavored water.

Current recommendations suggest drinking 6-8 8oz glasses a day, even if you don't feel thirsty. As you age, the body's natural thirst mechanism dulls, so even if you're not thirsty, you may still be at risk for dehydration.

Signs of dehydration include:

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| • Dry mouth | • Constipation |
| • Headaches | • Confusion |
| • Fatigue | • Dizziness |

Other factors influencing dehydration include humidity and hot temperatures, alcohol and caffeine consumption, medications, high-intensity activity, and high altitudes. So, don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. Make it a daily habit!

Sources: Take Charge of Your Health. Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Aging Services, 1999.
Virginia Age Page. <http://www.aging.state.va.us/>